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Guide to Food Defense In Warehouse and Distribution Centers

Protect your customers,
your employees, and
your business.



**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service**

What is Food Defense?

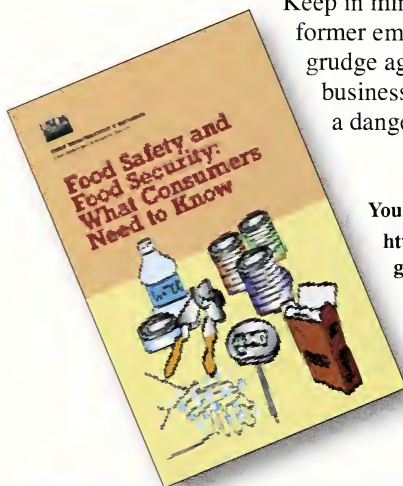
Food defense is putting measures in place that reduce the chances of someone intentionally poisoning the food supply in order to kill or hurt people, disrupt our economy, or ruin your business. Unfortunately, the things you do to keep food safe are not always enough to protect foods from intentional poisoning. This brochure will help you find out what food defense measures you need to put in place to protect your customers and business.

Who Might Poison a Food Product?

As a business owner, you must be alert to a potential attack against your operation. Anyone is capable of hurting or disrupting it. An attack can originate from within or outside your warehouse and distribution center. An attacker could even pose as one of the following:

- ✓ Customer or potential customer
- ✓ Truck driver making deliveries
- ✓ Salesperson visiting your business
- ✓ Utility representative
- ✓ Contractor doing repairs or performing services

Keep in mind that a current or former employee who has a grudge against you or your business also could pose a danger.



You can find this resource at:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Defense_&_Emergency_Response/Security_Guidelines/index.asp

Why Develop a Food Defense Plan?

A Food Defense Plan:

- ✓ will help you identify steps to keep food in your facility safe and secure,
- ✓ will help you respond to and recover from an emergency, and
- ✓ will help you provide a safe product to your customers, maintain a secure working environment for your employees, and protect your business.

In today's environment, many customers want their suppliers to have a Food Defense Plan. To assist owners and operators of warehouse or distribution facilities, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has created this brochure to help you develop a practical Food Defense Plan for your business.

Step 1 – Conduct a Self-Assessment


Take some time to review the food defense measures below. Check (✓) those that you currently have in place in your operation.

	✓
There is an outside surveillance system.	
Emergency exits have self-locking doors and/or alarms.	




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The building has working security cameras.	
The building has an alarm system that is tested regularly.	
Visitors and customers are asked to sign in and provide identification.	
Visitors, guests, and other non-employees (e.g., contractors, salespeople, truck drivers, etc.) are restricted to non-product areas unless they are with an employee.	
Storage areas for dangerous products or chemicals such as pesticides, industrial chemicals, and cleaning materials are restricted or locked.	
You keep track of which customers bought what products in case of a recall.	
You have a product recall plan.	



Trailers are locked and/or sealed when not being loaded or unloaded.	
An employee or you watch while trucks are loaded or unloaded.	
You check products for tampering.	
Advance notification from suppliers (by phone, e-mail, or fax) is required for all incoming deliveries.	



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You know the background of all of your employees.

Employees, visitors, and contractors (including construction workers, cleaning crews, and truck drivers) are identified in some manner at all times while on the premises.

You control entry of employees and contractors into the plant during working hours (e.g., coded doors, receptionist on duty, swipe card, etc.).

You control entry of employees and contractors into the plant during non-working hours (e.g., key cards or code numbers).

Step 2 – Develop a Food Defense Plan

Now that you have conducted the self-assessment and put a check by the measures that your warehouse and distribution center has in place, take a look at the measures where you didn't put a check. Are there practical improvements you could use to make your building and food safer? If so, you might want to make these improvements. Keep in mind that not all measures are necessary for all warehouse and distribution centers. For example, let's imagine you are not able to check "Visitors and guests are asked to sign in and provide identification." Perhaps you don't need this measure because you currently do not allow visitors or guests beyond a front desk and they are not allowed in any other area of the building. **Not checking a box does not necessarily mean there is a serious problem with security at your warehouse and distribution center.** However, it should cause you to think about whether certain food defense measures are needed.

Once you have identified the food defense measures you are currently practicing and those that you will need to add to your warehouse and distribution center, you should write these down. This will become your Food

Defense Plan. An easy way to develop your Food Defense Plan can be found on the FSIS Website (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Defense_&_Emergency_Response/Security_Guidelines/index.asp). There you will find a helpful resource guide called "Developing a Food Defense Plan for Warehouse and Distribution Centers." This resource guide offers more detailed information about food defense measures. In Step 2 of the resource guide, you can find a place to write down what you intend to do.

Step 3 – Implement Your Food Defense Plan

Now that you have developed a Food Defense Plan, put it into action by implementing the food defense measures. Remember to review your plan regularly to make necessary changes or improvements.

What do I do if there is an emergency or I think that a food product has been poisoned?

In an emergency, your first step should always be to **contact local law enforcement – dial 911**. Then call one of the following:

FSIS 24-hour emergency number (866) 395-9701 for meat, poultry, or egg products

FDA 24-hour emergency number (301) 443-1240 for all food products not listed above

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